

Castlemaine Naturalist

February 2010

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A brand new Bronzewing Pigeon explores the
Botanical Gardens - Photo by Noel Young

Rise and Shine; and six of us did! (on 12-12-2009)

Natalie de Maccus

Despite some pretty fierce competition for members' attention (a wedding, a 70th birthday party, family visits and, of course, the march in Melbourne against Global Warming), a small but enthusiastic group headed for the area known as the Rise and Shine, under the expert guidance of Rita Mills. This area, which is the site of former mining activity, is south of Newstead.

Our first stopping point was an area which had been substantially mined. We walked through this area and found few flowers (it was December, after all!): Chocolate lily (*Arthropodium strictum*), Sticky Everlasting (*Xerochrysum viscosum*), Tall Bluebell (*Wahlenbergia stricta* ssp *stricta*), Red-anther Wallaby-grass (*Joycea pallida*). Inside a small fenced area were five quite small (not much more than a foot high) Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*). Beyond the fenced area stood two *Allocasuarinas* which looked almost dead, but were probably the parent plants. A little further on was another (this time much larger) fenced area, again with *Allocasuarinas*, but in varying stages of development. Other under-story was present and was in obviously better condition than that outside the fencing. We did not see any signs to indicate whose work the fencing was. I imagine it was done by a local Landcare group. At this location was an old water-race, which played host to a multitude of mosquitoes.

We moved on for afternoon tea to the Rise and Shine Nature Reserve. Just outside the reserve we discovered Green Rock-fern (*Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia*), in what seemed a most unlikely place - no rocks in sight and the area was very dry. Following afternoon-tea, we decided to go for a walk in the reserve, but unfortunately we had insufficient time to do the circuit track (we had dallied too long over afternoon-tea), so had to settle for making the forward and return journeys on the same track.

The reserve is well set up with 21 guided markers. The walk, part of which follows an ancient river bed (should get the geologists intrigued) which flowed between five and 35 million years ago, was developed by Newstead Landcare Group with assistance from a number of individuals, and funded by Parks Victoria. An excellent guide sheet, courtesy Parks Victoria, is available at the site.

Birds noted: (Noel Young) Not that many, but near the water race a noisy group of Brown Treecreepers (probably nesting), Rufous Whistlers calling, Blue Wrens, Grey Shrike thrush, Dusky Woodswallows, and a Jacky Winter.

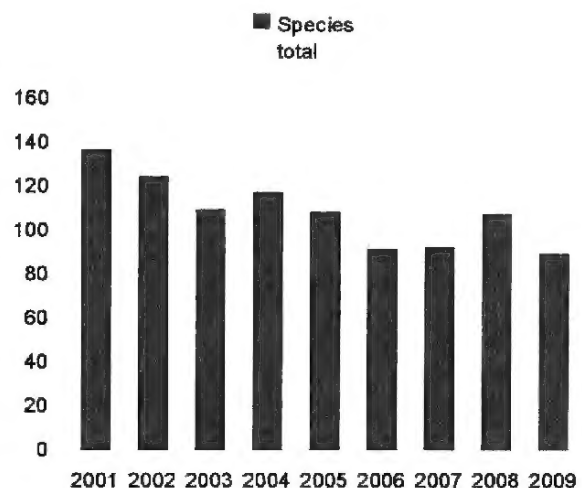
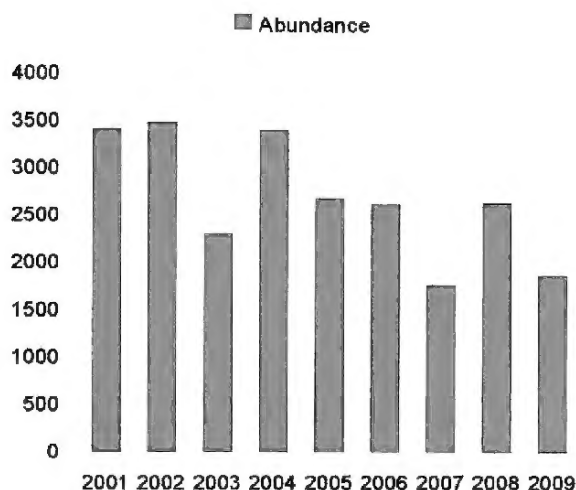
Annual bird count shows decline in Castlemaine

Chris Morris has supplied figures for the last nine years of the local totals for all teams in the Castlemaine district annual count held in early December. Unfortunately, they reveal a consistency with other studies and reports in recent years on the general decline of birds in Victoria.

Year	Species total	Abundance
2001	136	3404
2002	124	3474
2003	109	2298
2004	117	3388
2005	108	2666
2006	91	2610
2007	92	1756
2008	107	2620
2009	89	1853



Annual Bird Count - Castlemaine



The Occurrence of Moths from the Superfamily Noctuoidea in the Mt Alexander Shire.

Chris Timewell

The second volume of *Moths of Victoria*, authored by Peter Marriott and published as a book and CD in 2009 by the Entomological Society of Victoria, has been recently released. As for the first volume, it is an extremely high quality and excellent value-for-money publication. This volume provides hundreds of colour photos, descriptions assisting identification, summaries of ecology and Victorian distribution maps for all of the moth species from the superfamily Noctuoidea recorded from within the state. Using these distribution maps and other accompanying information provided on the CD, the two tables below list those moth species known to and potentially occurring in the Mt Alexander Shire.

In summary, from a total of 170 moth species from the Superfamily Noctuoidea known to occur in Victoria, at least 10 species have been confirmed as occurring in the Mt Alexander Shire (Table 1) and another 32 species are predicted to potentially occur (Table 2). Not all of these species have been scientifically described and named. Of the six families of moths from the superfamily Noctuoidea that are known to occur within Victoria, the Mt Alexander Shire has *known* representatives from four families (see Table 1). Representatives from the other two families are also *predicted* to occur in the Mt Alexander Shire (see Table 2).

In preparing these tables, I have not looked through the Museum of Victoria's collections or databases for additional local records. Similarly, I have not attempted to source additional local moth records from personal collections, with the exception of the moths described previously by Tony Morton within the *Castlemaine Naturalist* (2007, Volume 32 #7). I expect that moth enthusiasts from within the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club will have Noctuoidea moth species that I have identified here as 'potentially' occurring in the Mt Alexander Shire within their own collections. I encourage those enthusiasts to confirm the presence of these species within the local area in future editions of the *Castlemaine Naturalist*.

If members of the CFNC have a locally collected Noctuoidea moth that is not on this list at all, I also recommend contacting the Entomological Society of Victoria or the Museum of Victoria, as this may be evidence of an extension to a species known range.

Table 1. Common and Latin names of Superfamily Noctuoidea moths that are known to occur in the Mt Alexander Shire

Latin Name	Common Name	Notes (MOV = Moths of Victoria, Vol. 2)
<u>Family ARCTIIDAE</u>	<u>TIGER MOTHS / FOOTMAN</u>	
<i>Castulo doubledayi</i>	Doubleday's Footman	MOV refers to a Castlemaine record
<i>Halone ophiodes</i>	Cryptic Halone	MOV refers to a Castlemaine record
<i>Threnosia myochroa</i>	Heath Footman	MOV refers to a Castlemaine record
<i>Termessa shepherdi</i>	Shepherd's Footman	MOV refers to a Castlemaine record
<u>Family NOLIDAE</u>	<u>TUFT MOTHS</u>	
<i>Earias chlorides</i>	Pale Earias	MOV refers to a Castlemaine record
<i>Nola eurrhyncha</i>	Well-beaked Tuft-moth	MOV refers to a Fryerstown record
<u>Family NOTODONTIDAE</u>	<u>NOTODONTIDS</u>	
<i>Epicoma contristis</i>	Yellow-spotted Epicoma	MOV refers to a Fryerstown record
<i>Hylaeora dilucida</i>	Ochre Rough-head	Recorded by T. Morton (as noted in Castlemaine Naturalist #326)
<i>Trichiocercus</i> sp. 1	undescribed species	MOV refers to a Fryerstown record
<u>Family OENOSANDRIDAE</u>	<u>STUB MOTHS</u>	
<i>Discophlebia celaena</i>	Variable Stub-moth	MOV refers to a Castlemaine record

Table 2. Common and Latin names of additional Superfamily Noctuoidea moths that potentially occur in the Mt Alexander Shire (sourced from distribution maps in Moths of Victoria. Part 2)

Latin Name	Common Name
<u>Family ARCTIIDAE (from 77 Vic. sp.)</u>	<u>TIGER MOTHS / FOOTMEN</u>
<i>Anestia ombrophanes</i>	Clouded Footman
<i>Damias procrena</i>	Procrena Footman
<i>Palaeosia bicosta</i>	Two-ribbed Footman
<i>Palaeosia</i> sp. 2	undescribed species
<i>Phaeophlebosia furcifera</i>	Forked Footman
<i>Philenora aspectalella</i>	Little Mask Philenora
<i>Philenora undulosa</i>	Waved Philenora
<i>Nyctemera amicus</i>	Magpie Moth
<i>Scoliacma bicolora</i>	Red Footman
<i>Scoliacma pactolias</i>	Variable Footman
<i>Spilosoma canescens</i>	Dark-spotted Tiger Moth
<i>Spilosoma glatignyi</i>	Black and White Tiger Moth

Latin Name	Common Name
<i>Thallarcha pella</i>	Seductive Footman
<i>Tigrioides altera</i>	Alternating Footman
<i>Utetheisa pulchellodes</i>	Heliotrope Moth
<u>Family HERMINIIDAE (from 4 Vic. sp.)</u>	<u>HERMINIID MOTHS</u>
<i>Mormoscopa sordescens</i>	Night Moth
<u>Family LYMANTRIIDAE (from 14 Vic. sp.)</u>	<u>TUSOCK MOTHS</u>
<i>Acyphas semiochrea</i>	Omnivorous Tussock Moth
<i>Euproctis melanosoma</i>	Black-bodied Browntail Moth
<i>Urocoma baliolalis</i>	Pink Browntail Moth
<i>Urocoma marginalis</i>	Margined Browntail Moth
<u>Family NOLIDAE (from 38 Vic. sp.)</u>	<u>TUFT MOTHS</u>
<i>Nola monozona</i>	Epaulet Tuft-moth
<i>Uraba lugens</i>	Gum-leaf Skeletoniser
<u>Family NOTODONTIDAE (from 28 Vic. sp.)</u>	<u>NOTODONTIDS</u>
<i>Destolmia lineate</i>	Streaked Notodontid
<i>Epicoma</i> sp. 1	undescribed species
<i>Epicoma</i> sp. 2	undescribed species
<i>Hylaeora caustopis</i>	Great Rough-head
<i>Ochrogaster lunifer</i>	Processionary Moth
<i>Psalidostetha banksiae</i>	Banksia Moth
<i>Soroma bicolor</i>	Two-colored Notodontid
<i>Trichiocercus sparshalli</i>	Sparshall's Moth
<u>Family OENOSANDRIDAE (from 9 Vic. sp.)</u>	<u>STUB MOTHS</u>
<i>Discophlebia catocalina</i>	Yellow-tailed Stub-moth
<i>Oenosandra boisduvalii</i>	Boisduval's Autumn Moth

Primary School Bird Walks

Geraldine Harris

One hundred years ago a Newstead resident wrote -

“Friday last was Bird day at all the schools throughout the State. This was another of those silly ideas of the Education Department that allow children to escape the usual school curriculum. Another few such, and reading, writing and arithmetic, the three great essentials, will be entirely banished from school work. Bird day has been inaugurated so that children may be taught the habits of our feathered denizens of the bush, but in and around this district they are so scarce that not a dozen birds can be seen in an afternoons walk.” (extract from the Newstead Echo, November 2009)

I was interested to read this piece as I remember fondly the annual bird walks with Mrs Gabriel at Campbells Creek Primary School in the 50's. After one of these excursions, my friend and I revisited the Sports Ground after school to make our own list of birds and sighted " a huge grey bird" in a tree. We were so frightened we crouched terrified behind the clubrooms until her father came looking for us! Rather than being put off by this event, we couldn't wait to get to school the next day to tell about our adventure with what turned out to be a White-faced Heron!

I don't know if bird walks still feature in our school calendars these days but I believe these outings were very valuable and helped to foster a lifelong appreciation of nature for which I am very thankful.

CASTLEMAINE FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB SPEAKER LIST FOR 2010

February	IAN O'HALLORAN	
March	PETER MARRIOT	Moths
April	JULIA BROWN	Connecting Country
May	NEIL MAROTT	Grevilleas (?)
June	PAT BINGHAM	"Fine feathers make fine birds"
July	NICK LAYNE	The Loddon
August	EILEEN MACDONALD	Bees
September	MALCOM CALDER	
October	GRAEME WATSON *	Frogs
November	ELIZA TREE	Major Mitchell

* To be confirmed

Dawn Breakfast at Warburtons Bridge Rita Mills

Chris and Helen Morris arrived at the bridge at 6.15 a.m., but no one else was there - except for several campers! That was a little daunting, but while they breakfasted they were entertained by the occasional call of an Oriole, so that was encouraging. But by 6.45 there was still no one else, so they decided that 7 o'clock was the deadline, but a couple of minutes later I turned up, and we wandered across the bridge, spotting a couple of black duck and Scrub-wrens down on the pool below the bridge. As we walked back to the picnic area at 7.15 another car at last arrived - Hans and Anne van Gemert this time, but they had already had their breakfast! By this time I decided I'd have mine so we sat and

chatted and watched Blue Wrens, Welcome Swallows, Dusky Woodswallows and some Tree Martins.

Despite this, I think we all enjoyed our morning, and I was especially thrilled when I spotted the Oriole fly across just before we left the area. We came home with quite a respectable count of 20 species despite the fact that we couldn't go on round to our usual spot on the bend of the river because of the campers.

Birds recorded were :- Eastern and Crimson Rosellas, Magpie, Brown Treecreeper, White-winged Chough, Olive-backed Oriole, White-browed Scrub-wren, Pacific Black Duck, White-plumed, Fuscous and Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters, Long-billed Corella, Musk Lorikeet, Little Raven, Welcome Swallow, Tree Martin, White-faced Heron, Brown Falcon, Grey Shrike-thrush, Superb Blue Fairy-wren.

Observations

- ◆ At the December meeting:-
- ◆ Geoff Harris showed specimens of wild garlic, and reported the occurrence of Purple crowned Lorikeets around home.
- ◆ On a trip to the Sunset Country, Chris Timewell observed a number of birds including the Crimson Chat and Rufous Field-wren
- ◆ George Broadway reported a Pardalote in a nesting box
- ◆ Christine Kilmartin observed a White necked Heron eating a frog.
- ◆ Brown Treecreepers feeding young, Whistlers calling, White necked Heron, Yellow Robin, Spotted Pardalotes nesting in a bank, Blue Wrens with chicks, and Speckled Warblers still about at home – Denis Hurley
- ◆ Discovered a pair of Red capped Robins with nest over-hanging the “alpine track” near Manchester Reef. About ten days later after a bout of wild weather, it was disappointing to find a newly hatched chick dead on the ground and the nest deserted – Noel Young
- ◆ January:
- ◆ A Brush Wattlebird seen at home January – Rita Mills
- ◆ Feral Pigeons have discovered the bird feeder – George Broadway
- ◆ On a very hot day (11th January) two Southern Boobook Owls flew into a tree in the yard, and stayed till evening – Denis Hurley
- ◆ An unusual number of White winged Trillers invaded the district last spring. On the bird count day our team recorded them in three different locations and we have several other reports of observations in the area – Noel Young

<p>Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the club</p>

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Programme

February 2010

Fri Feb 12 Annual General Meeting - Election of Office bearers and Committee. **Speaker:** IAN O'HALLORAN

Sat Feb 13 field trip: Post Office Hill, Chewton.

Fri Mar 13 meeting: PETER MARRIOT: Moths

Sat Mar 14 Field trip: Moth trapping with Peter Marriot

Fri Apr 9 meeting: JULIA BROWN: Connecting Country

Sat Apr 10 field trip: Lerderderg River

VISITORS ARE WELCOME AT CLUB ACTIVITIES

General meetings - (second Friday of each month, except January) are held in the Uniting Church (UCA) Hall (enter from Lyttleton St.) at 8.00 pm.

Field Trips - (Saturday following the general meeting) leave from the car park opposite Castle Motel, Duke Street at 1.30pm sharp unless stated otherwise. BYO morning and/or afternoon tea. Outdoor excursions are likely to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions. There are NO excursions on total fire ban days.

Business meetings - fourth Thursday of each month, except December, at Natalies; 65 Johnstone Street, at 7.30 pm. All members are invited to attend.

Subscriptions for 2010

Ordinary membership: Single \$27, Family \$35

Pensioner or student: Single \$24, Family \$29

Subscription includes postage of the monthly newsletter, Castlemaine Naturalist

2009 Committee

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